IMPACT OF GOVERNMENT SPONSORED MID-DAY MEAL SCHEME ON SCHEDULED CASTE STUDENTS: A SOCIOLOGICAL STUDY IN KANPUR NAGAR

SYNOPSIS

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INTRODUCTION

India launched its first cooked mid-day meal scheme in Tamil Nadu in the 1950s and expanded it significantly in 1982. Gujarat introduced mid-day meals in the 1980s. Besides this, Kerala and some pockets of Madhya Pradesh and Orissa also began providing cooked meals by 1995 (Dreze and Goyal 2003; Khera 2006).

However, the mid-day meal scheme was launched as centrally sponsored scheme in 1995 by Government of India (GoI). It envisaged to provide 3kg of wheat and rice per month for disadvantaged children from class I to Vth in Government and Government aided schools if the students showed 80% attendance. Later it was extended to children studying in Education Guarantee Scheme (EGS), Alternative and Innovative Education (AIE) and National Labour Project (NLP) Centres. In a landmark order dated November 28, 2001, the Supreme Court of India directed all state governments to induce cooked mid-day meals in primary schools within six months. The nature of the scheme thereby changed drastically wherein the scheme was revised to provide cooked mid-day meal with 300 calories and 8-12 gms of protein to all children studying in government and government aided schools and EGS/AIE and NLP centres for a minimum 200 days.

Very few states, however, introduced cooked meals in primary schools before the Supreme Court's initial deadline of February 28, 2002 (Khera 2006). The deadline was later extended to January 2005 by the Supreme Court. Following the Supreme Court's orders and public mobilisation, the government of India revised its guidelines for the Mid-day Meal Scheme in 2004. According to these guidelines, the Mid-day Meal Scheme was being fully implemented in 20 states and all seven union territories, and partially in the remaining eight states. Since then, the coverage of the Mid-day Meal Scheme has been further extended, and today it is close to universal.

The new guidelines, in line with the Supreme Court order dated April 20, 2004, provide for meals to be served during the summer vacations in drought-affected areas. Some states, including Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu, have been following this directive. In addition to free supply of food grains, the revised scheme also provided central assistance for cooking cost (at the rate of Re 1 per child), transport subsidy, management, monitoring and evaluation costs. By 2007, the scheme was

further revised to cover children in upper primary (VI to VIII) classes, initially in Educationally Backward Blocks (EBBs) and later by 2008 the coverage included children in government, government aided primary and upper primary, local body and the EGS/AIE/NLP centres including Madarsa and Maktabs supported under *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan* (SSA) of all the areas across the country. However the calorie intake for upper primary children was fixed at minimum 700 calories and 20 gms of protein by providing 150 gms of food grains (wheat/rice) per child/school day.

After passing of Right to Education Act (RTE) 2010, *sarva shiksha abhiyan* (education for all) and mid-day meal scheme were subsumed under it by Government of India (GoI). Subsuming these two schemes made way for a holistic approach towards universalization of education for children from 6-14 years of age. With this Act, education became a fundamental right. These two programs, whose primary aim is to achieve education for the underprivileged and marginalized section of the society, along with the Act try to ensure modalities which facilitate children going to the school.

Besides, the Act also ensures that the child belonging to weaker section and the child belonging to disadvantaged group are not discriminated against and prevented from pursuing and completing elementary education on any grounds. It also underlines responsibility of the teacher to admit 25% of children, in class I, belonging to weaker and disadvantage section in the neighborhood. Mid-day meal scheme also lays down guidelines which ensure feeling of brotherhood amongst children belonging to different castes. The school management and development committee has an important role to play for the schemes and Act, as it monitors the working of school and implementation of the scheme. Since the mid-day meal scheme aims to supplement the initiative launched under *sarva shiksha abhiyan* to universalize elementary education, the two programs were clubbed under the Act.

Purposes of the mid-day meal scheme

The main objectives of the scheme has been aimed at enhancing the enrollment, attendance, retention of children especially those belonging to marginalized section (Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribe, Other Backward Classes, Women) of the society. Further, the scheme was launched to reduce their drop-out level, boost to universalize the primary and upper primary education and simultaneously improve the nutritional levels and the educational level of children. Besides, the revised guidelines also include

socialization roles such as inducing feeling of brotherhood amongst children belonging to different castes, class and gender, ensuring gender equity thereby eliminating discrimination and fostering social equity.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Understanding Social Exclusion

The term exclusion origins can be traced to French society of 1970s where Rene Lenoir was instrumental in raising awareness to the problems of socially excluded, in context of law for persons with disabilities. During 1980s, the language of social exclusion came to be increasingly used alongside that of poverty, especially in context of social policy in Europe. Exclusion means refuse to admit or consider (Webster's New World Dictionary). It is a process by which individuals experience deprivation, either of resources (such as income) or of social links to the wider community or society (Oxford Dictionary of Sociology). But this is just one facet of usage of the term. The concept of ` exclusion has been broadened over time. According to Durkheimian frame of reference, social exclusion can be conceptualized as a state of social or normative isolation from the wider society. The term has also been used with reference to situations of extreme marginalization (Oxford Dictionary of Sociology).

Various social scientists have tried to understand social exclusion. We will discuss here few of them. The concept of exclusion is not an exclusive category to the inequality, they are inter-related. Both the concept influences each other.

According to Silver (1994), exclusion can be understood in terms of three paradigms. Firstly, according to French Republican tradition, social exclusion is the expression of a rupture in the social bond between the individual and society. The second paradigm is rooted in Anglo-American liberalism and sees exclusion as occurring when people lack access to economic and social resources. In this, discrimination or group distinctions prevent people from exercising their choices as regards resources and social interactions. The third paradigm also called solidarity paradigm locates exclusion in the failure of integrating processes. In this, social exclusion results from social closure through the monopolization of key resources by powerful interest groups and the interplay of class, status, and political power.

Buvinic (2005 cited in Choudhary) defines social exclusion as "the inability of an individual to

participate in the basic political, economic and social functioning of the society and involves denial of equal access to opportunities imposed by certain groups of society upon others". Singh (2009: 355) has defined exclusion as a "process of socio-political and cultural denial and rejection".

In sociological parlance, Oommen (2010) argues that social exclusion is nothing new in human history; it is a normal social fact in Durkheminian sense of the term. However, one needs to identify forms of exclusion so as to initiate strategies for eliminating social exclusion by empowering those who are socially excluded. According to him, exclusion can be partial or complete; more importantly it is contextual.

The term 'social exclusion' has been defined by Kumar (2014: 105), as "as a multi-dimensional process in which involves various forms of exclusion are combined, which leads to inegalitarian society. Forms of exclusion include participation in decision-making and political processes, access to employment and material resources and integration into common cultural processes. In Indian context, social exclusion of Scheduled Castes is concerned with religious justification which gives legitimacy to discriminatory behavior."

Kumar also mentions that (2014:105), "it is a process by which the dominant groups keep out the other groups from being part of their own in socio-religious and secular domain of life". It can take place on ascribed statuses such as caste, race, gender, etc. or achieved statuses such as class, occupation, education, etc. Moreover there can be inter-sections within each group. An excluded individual or group or groups may be excluded on multiple pretexts such as religion, gender, regional, linguistic identity. It is a socio- psychological fact which exists in every known society in one form or the other. The dominant group keeps out the other groups from being part of their own. This process can be observed both in socio-religious and secular domain of life.

Exclusion on the basis of caste is so overpowering that even after attaining economic and political mobility; the group/collectivity is not accepted in totality by the castes located higher up in the hierarchy. It prevents castes outside the four-fold structure of Hindu social order from accumulating and attaining social and cultural capital to develop their consciousness. This, in turn, prevented them from raising their voice against exploitation and discrimination that they faced.

In Indian context, we can see that those who excluded (Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes) from the normative Hindu social order are deprived of basic human and fundamental rights. Though the Constitution guaranteed them rights, they were/are still denied of it. According to Kumar (2014: 109), this process of denial of rights is termed as discrimination.

It can thus be understood that exclusion is s dynamic and systematic process of being shut out, fully or partially, from any of the social, economic, political or cultural systems which determines social integration of persons in society. While discrimination is a rights based issue. It can be understood as the denial or non-realization of the civil, political, economic and social rights of citizenship (Walker & Walker 1997).

Sen (2000) draws attention to various meanings and dimensions of the concept of social exclusion. Unfavourable exclusion is a situation where people are being kept out. Unfavourable inclusion on the other hand, is a situation where people are being forced to be included. He also differentiated between active and passive exclusion. When there are deliberate policy interventions made by the government or agents to exclude people from opportunity, then active exclusion occurs. When there is no deliberate attempt to exclude, but sill exclusion takes place then it is passive exclusion.

Understanding Discrimination

Discrimination is an outcome of exclusion. This concept means treating unfairly and is used commonly in sociology. Since the American civil war, the term discrimination evolved in American English usage as an understanding of prejudicial treatment of an individual based solely on their race. Sumner and Giddings (Oxford Dictionary of Sociology) viewed discrimination as an expression of ethno-centrism. This emerged in the context of Europe. Its interpretation was understood in terms of stereotype which show how relations between ethnic and racial groups are affected by the socially derived beliefs each holds about the other.

In sociological parlance, it is understood in terms of patterns of dominance and oppression which are used for power and privilege. It results from tendencies towards authoritarianism among the powerful sections of any population. In Indian context, we can see that those who excluded (Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes) from the normative Hindu social order are deprived of basic human and fundamental

rights. Though the Constitution guaranteed them rights, they were/are still denied of it. According to Kumar (2014: 109), this process of denial of rights is termed as discrimination.

Theory of discrimination indicates that discrimination generates consequences (Thorat & Kumar 2008). These consequences adversely affect overall efficiency and thereby growth. Discrimination induces inefficiency due to misallocation of rights and resources. Factor immobility brings segmentation. In case of caste system, fixed occupations by not permitting mobility of human labour, land, capital and entrepreneurship across castes, the system creates segmented markets and brings imperfections in each of these markets and also promotes monopolistic markets. Factor immobility brings gross inefficiency in resource allocation and in economic outcome (Ambedkar 1987). This inefficiency, as per Fergusson (2006) becomes efficient enough for the expanded reproduction of the ruling group. As a result, there is expansion of poorly skilled and corrupt lower level bureaucracy incapable of fulfilling its obligations. This reproduction reshapes the conditions for the reproduction of society as a whole. Thus both state and ruling group are seen in relation of instrumentality.

Factor immobility also leads to unemployment, which is associated with the customary rules governing employment in various occupations (Ambedkar 1987). By not permitting the movement of labour between occupations, caste becomes a direct cause of much of voluntary unemployment for higher caste and involuntary unemployment for low caste persons.

Rao (2010) argues that in India, societal interrelations and state institutions become source of exclusion, discrimination, deprivation and isolation for some groups based on their identity like caste and ethnicity. Four ways have been identified by Rao by which exclusion and discrimination takes place. Firstly, exclusion takes place through denial in market by denying access to jobs, capital, sale, purchase of commodities and consumer goods. Secondly, discrimination occurs through ‘unfavourable inclusion’, that is, practice of differential treatment in terms and conditions towards discriminated groups. Thirdly, exclusion and discrimination can occur in terms of accessibility of social needs and services supplied by government or by private institutions. Fourthly, discrimination is seen in terms of participation in certain types of jobs.

To summarize, Thorat and Kumar (2008) underlines that the exclusion can be referred to as the processes

through which groups are wholly, or partially, excluded on the basis of group identity from full participation in economy and society in which they live, which are part of the state. It involves two crucial dimensions, namely societal interrelations, state, civil society which cause exclusion and its outcome which results in deprivation and discrimination.

Caste and Exclusion

Exclusion is the most distinguishing and defining character of the Indian society that it has acquired through the institution of caste. The caste system has not created only inequality as Ambedkar (1987) argued; it has created rather graded inequality.

Exclusion revolves around the societal institutions that exclude, discriminate, isolate and deprive some groups on the basis of group's identity like caste, ethnicity, religion, gender. It is built into the social structure. The caste based exclusion denies/deprives access to civic, cultural, social, economic and political rights and opportunities. It prevents people from interacting freely with others and taking part in the full economic, social and political life of the community.

Theoretical attempts in social and economic interpretation of caste system recognize that caste as a system of social and economic governance is determined by certain customary rules and norms, which are unique and distinct (Akerlof 1976; Scoville 1991; Lal 1984; Ambedkar 1987; Kumar 2014). The organization of caste system is based on the division of people in social groups/castes in which rights of each individual caste are pre-determined or ascribed by birth and made hereditary. Entitlement of rights is unequal and hierarchical. The rights are unequally assigned and therefore entitlement of rights gets narrower and narrower as one move down in caste hierarchy from high to low caste. The system also provides for community-based regulatory mechanism to enforce the system through the instruments of social ostracism (social and economic penalties), and reinforces it further with justification from some philosophical elements in Hindu religion such as theory of karma and re-birth (Ambedkar 1987).

Judge (2014) argued that Scheduled Castes face discrimination and exclusion at every level which varied across castes and regions. They were internally heterogeneous and practiced exclusion with each other also. Their unique status within the four fold structure of Hindu social order was justified by the dharma-karma principle, supposed to come from mouth of Krishna. Hinduism is considered as the ideological

basis of the perpetuation of their continuing oppression and exclusion.

Kumar (2014) draws attention to sequencing of processes of exclusion, deprivation and discrimination in Hindu social order which is embedded in caste system. These create a situation where groups move from a position of absolute exclusion to a position of inclusion, yet discriminated. Certain groups are first excluded from the four-fold structure of Hindu social order. Then we see that such groups are deprived of various rights. However, when they were guaranteed rights, they were denied access to it, thus discriminating against them. Such exclusion, deprivation and discrimination are quite visible in state institutions. This has been dealt under exclusion and state concept.

Thus, due to the hierarchical or graded nature of the caste system, the entitlements to civil, economic and educational rights for different castes become narrower as one goes down in hierarchical ladder in the caste system. Various castes in their rights and duties get coupled with each other in a manner such that the rights and privileges of higher castes becomes the causative reasons for the disadvantage and disability of the lower castes, particularly the Scheduled Castes and the other backward castes located at the bottom of caste hierarchy.

Exclusion and State

Various sociologists and social scientists have tried to understand state with regard to nation, citizenship, territoriality, sovereignty, governance, security, ideology. Such as in Weber's work *Economy and Society* (1968), we see state is conceived in terms of an organization that holds a monopoly within a fixed territory over the legitimate exercise of power and use of violence. Midgal (2001: 15:16) defines state as a "field of power marked by the use and threat of violence and shaped by the image of a coherent, controlling organization in a territory, which is a representation of the people bounded by that territory and the actual practices of its multiple parts".

Power is coterminous with exclusion and power entails hierarchy. Hierarchy is embedded in bureaucracy which is an integral part of the state. It is through bureaucracy that state carries out the various policies and programs, reaching out to people, engaging with them. However, bureaucracy is seen not limited to the state as per Weber's conception of state and its boundaries.

In Weber's view, bureaucracy is a dehumanized system of impersonal, rationalized procedures and rules.

Extension of bureaucracy to aspects of society legitimize domination, it quells protest, inhibit social change, thus maintain status quo of social hierarchies, socio-economic order and public-private distinction. Principles of official jurisdiction, hierarchy, management of office based on documents and subaltern officials, training and rules based activities characterizes bureaucracy. According to Gramsci, bureaucracy is crystallization of leading personnel which exercises coercive power and at a certain point it becomes a caste.

Abrams (Sharma and Gupta 2006 :46) criticizes Weber's and Gramsci's perception of state and sees state as an ideological construct that legitimates subjection, claim to domination, institutionalize political power, and unifies misrepresentation of disunity and incoherence of the workings of political power and government practices and an exercise in moral regulation. In the same vein, Althusser also argued that state is embodied as repressive state apparatus and ideological state apparatus. Former comprises government, administration, army, police, courts, prisons which function by violence. Latter comprise religious ideological state apparatus (ISA), educational ISA, family ISA, legal ISA, political ISA, trade union ISA, communications ISA, cultural ISA, which function by ideology.

There is another facet to look at state, through the prism of culture. Anthropological perspective articulated by Gupta and Sharma (2006) poses that states might be structurally similar but they may have different meanings for different populations. State is substantiated in people's lives through the banal practices of bureaucracies. This every engagement with the state determines meanings that people impart to state. Proceduralism, banal repetition of everyday actions and the mundane realities carried out by bureaucracy reproduce the state and its superiority over other institutions, which pave way for exclusion of some.

Both went further to argue that through daily routines of proceduralism and precedent setting, social inequalities are also produced and maintained, thus leading to exclusion and discrimination at various levels where state operates. Many state implemented development and empowerment programs, meant for disadvantaged section, are intended to reduce social inequalities; however the very procedures of state embedded in bureaucratic institutions perpetuate these inequalities. Upper class and so-called higher caste people are better situated to take advantage of state programs than poorer and lower-caste

people.

Sharma (2006), in her study on Mahila Samakhya (MS) Program in Uttar Pradesh, has argued how such programs depict interlinkages between representations, symbols, practices and materiality. That is, how official license plate, workers with forms become markers of power and status. These symbols are associated with statist authority. Ruling class ideology is mobilized and becomes state ideology and thereby reproduces inequalities and perpetuates exploitation. This has been delineated by Sharma and Gupta (2006) by focusing on practices and representations of the state.

Such programs continue to be based on a set of universalized norms and hegemonic meanings of poverty, disempowerment and tradition (Escobar 1995; Esteva 1992; Feguson 1994 quoted in Gupta and Sharma 2006: 28). Even though poverty may manifest itself differently in different places and communities and poor people may have different perceptions of their situations and needs, development discourse explains and circulates hegemonic understanding of poverty and a universal model to address it.

The histories and memories of people determine the experiences and understandings of target population towards government programmes. Encountering state at local level, through policies and programmes, manifested through bureaucracy also shapes people's perception of the state. This has been underlined by Gupta (2006). Gupta has also argued how relationship with state officials, cultural capital and context determine exclusion within policies and programmes generated by state. The example of lower caste man who made various complaints against corruption, quoted by Gupta (2006), depicted not only exclusion from government services but also lack of cultural capital required to negotiate for such services. The bureaucratic power and cultural capital owned by the landowning castes benefits them in sidelining the advantages of any schemes, programmes and policies initiated by the state. Thereby, excluding those for whom policy has come into place.

Ram Singh's case also shows that the interpretation of the state has to be situated with respect to the location of the individual. He belonged to Scheduled Caste and owned television set which was very rare to find amongst their caste. His own daily encounters with local officials suggest a very corrupt picture of state while on the other hand television gave him a very different picture of state which

operates at higher level, who are seen as providing redressals for grievances.

It thus becomes visible that state and other entities like community, polity, society, civil society are culturally constructed in specific ideological fields. Therefore, construction of state within particular historical and cultural conjunctures will give us clear picture of state policies and its programmes implemented by bureaucratic apparatus. Construction and interpretation of state also varies according to the manner in which different actors are positioned. Looking at actor's position also becomes important in order to understand state and its programmes.

Beteille (2012) has argued that relationship between caste and political power has to be examined in the context of change. One of the aspects of power is institutional and formal which is achieved through state institutions such as political parties and panchayats. For example, the political party which is in government wields more power. Functioning of panchayat as institutions of local level governance, need to be studied in case of Kanpur, as most of the time panchayats in Uttar Pradesh are non-functional. However, Singh (2009) add that panchayats are emerging institutions of political and socio-cultural dominance which has taken a non-upper caste form, though social power and resources are still controlled by so-called upper-caste. Most of the programs are carried out by community and monitored by panchayat in rural areas. In case of mid-day meal, Gram Panchayat is entailed with the responsibility of monitoring the program. Power relations within the village change thus affecting not only membership of Panchayat but also implementation of policies and programmes.

Power of caste, class and groups of village transcends also beyond the village. It is also seen that as state expands, power of the ruling group also expands which in turn reproduces the relations of production. This expansion is thereby justified on grounds of national development (Fergusson 2006).

Therefore, it can be implied that wherever government programs are in place, various factors such as relationship between caste and political power, location of an individual, cultural capital, day-to-day engagement with the state, representation of the state becomes important to study in order to understand the exclusion within government institutions and its dynamics.

Social Inclusion

It is understood as accepting the existence of a group or individual or society and therefore acceptance

of their rights and privileges. When series of actions are taken in the direction of such an acceptance which make the group access to resources and encourages their participation, it then results in social inclusion.

The term originated in French social policy in 1970s, argues Oommen (2014). Social inclusion is understood in terms of securing social, economic and political justice, which is in turn attained through rights. Rights ensure equality of status and opportunity for all groups and individuals who are at the margins of the society, thus ensuring the participation. According to Darapuri (2010:32), it can be defined as a "series of positive actions to achieve equality of access to goods and services, to assist all individuals participate in their community and society, to encourage the contribution of all persons to social and cultural life and to be aware of, and to challenge all forms of discrimination". Social inclusion is about ensuring the marginalized or excluded to have greater participation in decision-making which affects their lives as well as allowing them to improve their living standards and their overall wellbeing. Kumar (2014) argues that social exclusion and inclusion can be seen both as dichotomy and a continuum. In case of dichotomy, exclusion is seen as a mean to refuse to admit while inclusion is seen as treating the group or individual or society as equal.

When the two processes are seen as continuum, then exclusion is seen as given and inclusion is to be attained. Inclusion is seen as slow and gradual. In this backdrop, society makes efforts to include the excluded categories. Oommen (2010) also says that formal inclusion and informal exclusion can co-exist.

According to theory of inclusion, inclusion is seen embedded in policy that brings social, educational, economic empowerment and that brings equal opportunity. This will help to enhance the capacity of discriminated groups to take advantage of ongoing social and economic progress. The system of graded entitlement to rights results in disparities in social, economic and educational conditions of different caste groups. Policy of social inclusion is required to ensure equal participation for all castes in various spheres of society. The policy framework will have to be governed by the forms and spheres of discrimination and their consequences on the discriminated groups.

Inclusive policy brings in equal access in employment, education and legislature by ensuring equal

opportunity. Participation in terms of decision-making becomes equally important which is ensured through representation. Representation and participation in governance of discriminated groups is thus, central to both inclusive policy and inclusive society.

THEORETICAL ORIENTATION

The study will use theories given by Durkheim, theory of cultural and social reproduction given by Bourdieu, Apple's views on ideology, curriculum and knowledge and Foucault's theory of power.

Emile Durkheim and his theory of education

In Emile Durkheim's view, educational systems reflect underlying changes in societybecause the systems are a construct built by society, which naturally seeks to reproduce its collectively held values, beliefs, norms, and conditions through its institutions. Thus, as timeunfolds, educational systems come to contain the imprint of past stages in the development ofsociety, as each epoch leaves its imprint on the system. By uncovering these imprints and analyzing them, the development of a society can be reconstructed from the educational system. The reflection of such changes, however, would not be possible if educational systems were not mirrors of society, albeit on a miniature scale. Changes in society manifestthemselves in the educational system because it is constructed by society's members to, in Durkheim's words, "express their needs". In short, society constructs its educational systemto promote and reproduce its ideal of what a human should be, especially of what a human being should be as a part of society. In this way, the educational system also becomes a 'constraint', a term that Durkheim uses in the sense of cultural determination and the influence of socialization (Lukes 1972:12). For Durkheim, education becomes a constraint,as Steven Lukes explains, "When certain socially given ideas and values are internalized byindividuals who thereby acquire certain beliefs, wants and feelings and act in certain ways" (Ibid: 12). Lukes quotes Durkheim as saying that education is thus "a continuous effort to impose on the child ways of seeing, feeling and acting at which he would not have arrived spontaneously".

The ideal of what the child should become, for Durkheim, arises from the ` an extent, Durkheim says, there is a set of underlying beliefs common enough among all stratum of society to allow their manifestation, though sometimes the manifestation takes a slightly altered form to suit the

nature of the institutions. Because the system of education arises from the common beliefs of society's members; it is a product of collective, not individual thought. Thus, a system of education, being a product of collectivity, necessarily embodies those values that are expressed by the conscious collective. As a society's collective values change, the educational system reflects these changes. Education, for him, constitutes an essential pre-requisite for reproduction of society. Durkheim points out this tendency as he comments on the relationship between education, religion and society's ideal view of a human being.

Yet, various social groups or strata may have different beliefs. The parts of the educational system that are geared toward a particular group will reflect that social group's values more than those of the other groups. The ideals common to all the groups, however, will most strongly be reflected because, Durkheim believes, "society can survive only if thereexists among its members a sufficient degree of homogeneity; education perpetuates and reinforces this homogeneity by fixing in the mind of the child, from the beginning, the essential similarities that social life demands" (Giddens 1972:203). If the values of a societychange in a subtle manner, they may become manifest in the educational system in a more readily perceptible manner. Durkheim found education to reflect underlying changes in society. As such, he used educational systems as a window into society's organization and values, both past and present.

Durkheim rejected the very idea of a neutral or amoral general education. Moral ideals, in his account, are public. They contribute to the creation and re-creation of the worldabout us. They are inescapable. Durkheim considered the moral aspect the most important aspect of education. The state is viewed here as the steering force behind moral discipline, entitled to think and act instead of representing society. Abbot (1981:238) says that for Durkheim, state plays a crucial role in educational socialization. He talks in favor of nationalcurriculum. For Durkheim (functionalist), the role of education is to provide a mechanism tohelp connect different groups to a common collective conscience—one that ensured the maintenance of social order.

Pierre Bourdieu and his ideas of cultural capital

He argues that various forms of capital (cultural, economic and social) are differentlymobilized and

realized through learning experiences in the home, in schools and in the wider society. His (1973) theory of *'Cultural Production and Social Reproduction'* states that major role of the educational system is *"cultural reproduction"* of dominant classes. He adds that major role of educational system is *'the social function of elimination'*. This involves theelimination of members of the working class from higher levels of education. It is accomplished in two ways; by examination failure and by self – elimination. Due to their relative lack of dominant culture, working class pupils are more likely to fail examination which prevents them from entering higher education. Bourdieu concluded that education insociety is the contribution it makes to social reproduction – the reproduction of the relationships of power and privilege between social classes. Social inequality is reproducedin the educational system and as a result it is legitimized. The privileged position of the dominant classes is justified by educational success; the underprivileged position of the lowerclasses is legitimized by educational failure. He further argues that students whose parents are well educated, that is those who are in possession of cultural capital, are more likely to succeed than those who come from less advantageous groups.

He argues that the cultural capital stored in schools acts as an effective filtering device in the reproduction of a hierarchical society. For example, schools partly recreate thesocial and economic hierarchies of the larger society through what is seemingly a neutral process of selection and instruction. They take the cultural capital (knowledge, skills, language, disposition) the *habitus,* of the middle class, as natural and employ it as if all children have had equal access to it. Schools take as natural what is essentially a social gift, i.e. cultural capital. Cultural capital ('good taste,' certain kinds of prior knowledge, abilitiesand language forms) is unequally distributed throughout society and this is dependent in large part on the division of labor and power in that society. 'By selecting for such properties, schools serve to reproduce the distribution of power within the society.' For Bourdieu, to understand completely what schools do, who succeeds and who fails, one must not see culture as neutral, as necessarily contributing to social progress. Rather, one sees the culture tacitly preserved in and expected by schools as contributing to inequality outside of these institutions.

Kumar mentions that due to loss of cultural capital for those who have beendeliberately kept out of Hindu social order, they were denied opportunities to have equal access to different institutions of governance, production, education, religion, etc. hence, it isargued by Kumar that exclusion in Indian society means 'negation of existence' of the groups in society. Their presence is meager and it is justified on number of constructed ideas such as"lack of merit" and "lack of capacity" (2013:69).

Michael Foucault

He focused on the critique of teaching as an oppressive social power, an important part of the Foucault "vulgata" meaning knowledge is power. The teacher has a psychological, social, and physical power. S/he can reward and punish, exclude and rise. Her authority is institutional, charismatic or both at the same time (Dussel 2010:40; Steiner 2003:13).

He points to the need to understand, historically and sociologically, the discourses that have shaped teaching as a position of power. Foucault invites the reader to think about education as a social and historical practice that involves power relations but that can be nonethe less, a training exercise in the paradoxes of freedom, and that seeks to expand its limits through new experiences (Dussel 2010:30:31). Schools sought to produce a total transformation of students' bodily behavior, through rules and regulations that prescribed social performances, appearances, and moral scales and that established "normal" patterns aswell as deviations. Notions of decency and decorum, cleanliness and filthiness were tied intopolitical, economic, and moral categories, and constructed power relations that had pervasiveeffects (cf. Vigarello 1988).

The positive valuation of discipline in school is well known, it brings control over the cult of individualism to grow, it helps in manifesting what is best in man, it turns the egoisticindividual to new social being and most importantly it instills essential moral/ethic values oflarger political society into cognition of the child. However, discipline in school cannot be always attached with a positive meaning. It deviates, it creates other meanings; it has its negative manifestations. Discipline in school with its principles of 'hierarchical observation'or 'surveillance', 'normalizing judgments, 'examination' and 'micro politics of power' andoppression creates 'docile bodies' and normal conformist/regimented schooled minds (Foucault 1997:137). It also controls one's potentiality of

conscientization to evolve, deniesspirit of freedom and hampers creativity and damages one's democratic imagination.

In the book 'Discipline and punish', one of his critical contribution to the implicationsof ethos of discipline and punishment for a modern society is where he argues how the disciplines became general principles of domination (Foucault 1997:137). It is in this context, he discusses the function of school as a disciplinary institution and its role in the emergence of a modern disciplinary society. In the modern times, Foucault says, the notion of discipline undertaken a radical turn,from medieval penal theory of physical pain to 'new techniques of discipline', that acts on the depth of the heart, the mind, and the will and culminated in the emergence of institutionof imprisonment (Pathak 2002:37). Therefore for Foucault, it is no surprise that this shift inthe mechanisms of discipline gave birth to new forms of technicians: the wardens, doctors, chaplains, psychiatrists, psychologists and educationists who emerged as the authorities to exercise the new 'micro physics of power' destined with a 'whole set of accessing, diagnostic, prognostic and normative judgments' (Foucault 1977:139). However, the techniques of discipline was not confined only to prisons, it crossed the boundary of prisonsto other contemporary institutions; it was there in hospitals, factories, schools and the barracks. This is so because modern societies are maintained not so much by the army, police and centralized state apparatus, but essentially by these 'carceral' institutions armed with techniques of discipline and surveillance (Pathak 2002:37). Therefore, in modern societies, besides other institutions of discipline, school emerges as one of the important institutions through which discipline is being exercised.

For Foucault, for discipline to be exercised in school, what is important is placementand distribution of individuals into proper space because, the principles of surveillance needsthat space which must be distributed so that the 'constant supervision and observation' of each pupil is possible. This mechanism made supervision of each pupil easy, as it leads to emergence of modern class system of teaching and learning where each pupil is assigned with the similar work and equal access to similar instructions, skills and knowledge perpetually observed by the authority of teachers. In the process, the activities of the pupils are governed by putting their actives into certain time limits or

by the time table. And Foucault says, “the division of time became increasingly minute; activities are governed byin detail by orders that had to be obeyed immediately” (Foucault 1997:150). The violation ofthis disciplinary mechanism, Foucault says, immediately leads to ‘micro penalty’, the micro penalty of time (latelessness, absence, interruption of tasks), of activity (inattention, negligence, lack of zeal), of behavior (impoliteness, disobedience), of speech (idle chatter, insolence), of body (incorrect attitude, irregular gestures, lack of cleanliness, of sexuality, impurity, indecency) (Ibid: 178). As a result, this disciplinary devise of school, through its controlling mechanism like hierarchical observation, normalizing judgment and examination, create that normal child needed by the society. By doing such activities, schools act like an oppressive mechanism; it controls one’s activity and movements by exercising power, withcoercion it restricts one’s freedom and it normalizes one with imposing certain values that leads to create a regimented conformist mind. Thus, what happens in schools in the name ofdiscipline and normalcy ends individual creativity and imagination and free thinking. It closes one’s door to emancipation and inflicts oppression subtly.

Meg Maguire

Maguire (2010:61) argues that the construction of the teacher is always context- dependent that is, the teacher is produced out of local histories, cultures and politics. The teacher is reconstructed as a state technician, trained to deliver a national curriculum, in thenation’s schools. Regulation is managed through the production of a curriculum for teachereducation, the generation of criteria against which teacher ‘competence’ is measured and frequent inspections of the teaching courses and providers. Controls are built into the initialtraining and are carried into the early years of teaching in order to maintain a culture of highexpectations, attention to national targets, and a concentration on the basic skills of literacyand numeracy. In this way, a very particular version of the ‘teacher’ is made up. The emphasis is on compliance with competencies rather than with thinking critically about practice; focusing on teaching rather than learning; doing rather than thinking; skills rather than values. In this way, the pressures of regulation and control in producing the teacher areinserted into, and circulated through, the state school system.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Discriminatory Practices within Mid-Day Meal Scheme

Thorat (2007) quotes a study based on sample of about 550 villages from 5 states- Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Rajasthan- which reported that exclusion and discriminatory treatment afflicts more than one out of three fair price shops and more than one out of three government schools serving mid-day meals (averages for five states of 35.5% and 37% respectively). In terms of geographical spread, it is unquestionably a nation-wide problem with respondents from every state reporting caste discrimination and exclusion in mid-day meal scheme.

Various studies (**Thorat and Sadana** 2009, UNICEF 2005, **Jain and Shah** 2005, **Dreze and Goyal** 2003, **Dreze** 2004, **Afridi** 2005, **Mamgain and Diwakar** 2012, **Sen** 2010) have shown that there is identity based in food and nutrition programmes being carried out in India. There is exclusion of marginalized communities not just in terms of poor access to health and nutrition schemes but also in terms of implementation.

The study done by **Indian Institute of Dalit Studies** (IIDS 2006), quoted by **Thorat and Sadana** (2009) reports exclusion and discriminatory treatment in mid-day meal scheme. Discrimination in Mid-day Meal Scheme entails denial of meals, separate sitting for Scheduled Caste (SC) children, serving them last, SC children being punished for asking to be served first, not being served a sufficient quantity or quality, serving from a distance, separate plates and glasses for SC children and the most widespread and prominent discrimination found—the refusal to employ SC cooks. While exclusion includes prohibition from accessibility, participation, such as not letting Scheduled Castes to be hired as Mid-day Meal Scheme cooks, preventing them to organize/operationalize the implementation of the program, not letting Scheduled Castes child access the benefits of the Mid-day Meal Scheme, not letting Scheduled Castes become part of School Development and Monitoring Committee (SMC) or community which are responsible for implementation of the scheme.

Thorat and Sadana (2009) are of the view that SCs suffer from unequal access to public services presumably because of caste and untouchability related discrimination and exclusion. Lee and Thorat (2006) and National Commission for Dalit Human Rights (NCDHR 2008) reports that the States of Uttar

Pradesh and Bihar refused to implement the program and at some places program closed down due to upper caste community opposition and where they were unable to close it down; they opposed the hiring of Scheduled Castes cooks in the program.

Their practicising of purity-pollution and untouchability knows no bounds. The 'opposition to Scheduled Caste cooks' is actually a blanket term describing different patterns of specific caste-based discrimination and exclusion, observed during the study done by the **Indian Institute of Dalit Studies** (IIDS 2006). It puts forth that wherever Scheduled Castes cooks were employed, non-Scheduled Caste parents either asked their children to come home during lunch time or used to send them packed lunches. Upper caste parents' community even sometimes forced the administration to either replace the Scheduled Castes cook with non-Scheduled Castes or they used to ask for complete shutdown of the program/scheme. Sometimes the dominant caste parents even withdraw their child from the school where Scheduled Castes cook is employed and ensure their child's admission in a school where the cook is a non-Scheduled Castes so as to avoid getting polluted by the touch of a Scheduled Castes.

Most of the appointments of a cook thus are done on the basis of caste. This has been highlighted by **Valmiki** (2010). Upper caste parents resist the appointment of Scheduled Castes cooks in Mid-day Meal Scheme. The study by **Dreze and Goyal** (2009) in states of Karnataka, Chattisgarh and Rajasthan clearly brings out the resistance by upper caste. Scheduled Castes cooks are largely confined to schools with no upper caste children in Chattisgarh and Rajasthan, perhaps to avoid hostility between so-called upper caste and lower caste people and thereby letting former dominate others. For instance, in Kolu Pabuji of Jodhpur district (Rajasthan), a *Rajput* parent said to have thrown sand in the mid-day meal after finding that the cook was a *Meghwal* (Scheduled Caste) woman. While in Karnataka, the appointment of Scheduled Castes cooks seems to have made wide social acceptance. This is so because there are clear guidelines for selection of cooks in Karnataka, giving preference to Scheduled Castes and women (especially widows).

Nevertheless, the recent report by **Indian Express** (Keeping Dalits Out, Nov6 2015) proved otherwise. In Kagganahalli village (Kolar district), 100 children of dominant caste (Kurubas and landholding Vokkaligas as OBCs) left the government higher primary school since the appointment of Radhamma

(Adi Karnataka Caste; Scheduled Caste) as head cook in Mid-day Meal Scheme while 18 children remained to continue in the same school on the condition that she will not cook. As the result, the Block Education Officer (BEO) decided to put a stop to Mid-day Meal Scheme as parents started asking for transfer certificates for their child. Children of dominant caste parents are strictly warned against eating the mid-day meals. Even the children belonging to her caste were also forced to leave school due to pressure from so-called upper castes in the village. Some of the teachers also left the school. The very idea of Radhamma applying for the post of cook could not be digested by the dominant caste people and they started social boycott of her family. The head of School Development and Monitoring Committee (SMC) expressed anguish at the appointment of Scheduled Caste as cook.

Another incident of Komara village in West Godavari district of Andhra Pradesh exemplifies the above instance. The dominant caste women organized under the state government's Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas (DWCRA) scheme, successfully mobilized community and administrative support to bar a Scheduled Caste women's DWCRA group from obtaining employment as cooks in the village Mid-day Meal Scheme.

Bhunabhay village in Ajmer district of Rajasthan also illustrates the trends identified above. In Bhunabhay, when the Mid-day Meal Scheme began in July 2002, Sunita Bhil, a ST widow was hired to prepare the mid-day meal of *ghughri*. Dominant caste parents, considering Sunita polluted on account of her caste, ordered their children not to eat the mid-day meal at their school and effectively launched a proxy hunger strike through their children. Alongside, the dominant caste parents also met with and pressured the dominant caste headmaster of the school to dismiss Sunita Bhil from employment. Ultimately, the headmaster consented, expelling Sunita Bhil and hired a dominant caste woman instead. The Mid-day Meal Scheme of a government school in Ranga Reddy district in Andhra Pradesh lasted exactly ten days, before the dominant caste community sensing that the Scheduled Castes cooks had been hired, made moves to close down the school itself. This example does not emanate from the IIDS survey, but from a media report in the Telugu daily, *Vaartha*, Ranga Reddy District Pullout, 04 January 2003.

Probe Revisited (2013) has mentioned about instances in which parents seem to be keen to keep certain

boundaries. In 21 per cent of those schools where plates were supplied, teachers said that children brought their own plates. Chandrika Rai, a 40 year old uneducated labourer from a very poor SC household in a village in Dhanbad in Jharkhand spoke powerfully of caste discrimination in the context of the midday meal. "The worker in the centre is Brahman, and we are Harijans. When our children are given food, they are made to sit separately from the other children, and the plates they use have to be washed by their parents. Or there is a pond behind the school where the children go and wash their plates themselves. One child broke his hand when he fell into the pond while washing his plate".

Lee and Thorat (2006) mentioned in their study that in Kamalaputhur village in Thiruvannamalai district of Tamil Nadu, the respondents narrated that a Scheduled Caste girl in second standard was prohibited from eating and chased out of her school (which was apparently located in the dominant caste locality) by the dominant caste community members when she tried to partake in the Mid-day Meal Scheme, thus denial of complete accessibility. In 5 other villages (3 in Andhra Pradesh and 2 in Tamil Nadu), the respondents stated that some Scheduled Castes children were barred from participation in the Mid-day Meal Scheme on account of either caste-based discrimination or due to the 'untouchability' syndrome. While these 5 villages constituted only 2 percent of the 306 villages surveyed, the living practice of outright exclusion has profound implications for the Right to Food and in limiting the Scheduled Castes access to that Right. More common than outright exclusion of the Scheduled Castes children was 'inclusion with negative distinction', i.e., caste-based discrimination in the Mid-day Meal Scheme.

Service providers from lower castes are discriminated against by the upper castes in their refusal to eat in the Mid-day Meal Scheme if the food is prepared by a Scheduled Caste cook (**Thorat and Lee** 2010; **Ramachandran** 2004; **Menon** 2003). Even State Government's effort at some places, to promote the participation of SCs as cooks in the Mid-day Meal Scheme failed miserably with strong opposition from other caste groups.

It can thus be argued that the Mid-day meal instead of eroding prevailing social inequalities is becoming a tool of reinforcement. **Dreze and Goyal** (2009) argues that during a pilot survey in Rajasthan (Patelon ki Bhaghel in Rajsamand district), it was found that Scheduled Castes children were asked to drink in

their cupped hands while other children used common glasses. This defeats the socialization role of mid-day meal. Even **Centre for Equity Studies** (CES) survey, conducted during 2009, though did not find such explicit discrimination as observed in Patelon ki Bhagel, it however, did not rule out the possibility of subtle forms of caste prejudice and social discrimination, such as sending children with packed food or asking them to come for lunch where Scheduled Castes are employed as Mid-day Meal Scheme cooks. Such behavior by upper caste parents shows their skeptical attitude towards scheme.

Behind these trends of dominant caste behavior is the classic Hindu understanding of purity and pollution, according to which food prepared by a Scheduled Caste - that is, an untouchable - is considered 'polluted' by virtue of its contact with the intrinsically polluted Scheduled Caste. On another level, dominant caste opposition to Scheduled Castes cooks also represents a power struggle over livelihood rights. In the manner of social boycotts, concerted dominant caste opposition to Scheduled Castes cooks functions to break their economic aspirations, that is, their entry into new livelihood domains such as government employment as Mid-day Meal Scheme cooks at the village level. The rural dominant caste establishment, which traditionally enjoys the economic dependence of the Scheduled Caste community, perceives their entries into new economic spheres as threatening, and therefore, responds with a backlash. Such is a form of exclusion from hiring Scheduled Caste as cooks and also exclusion in terms of offering lower wage to them. The concept of purity and pollution associated with untouchability signified denial to marginalized castes from participation in the mid-day meal scheme. Thus, excluding them from employment, source of livelihood and income.

The guidelines of Mid-day Meal Scheme do not provide any directions to address the issue of discrimination and differential treatment in service delivery. Moreover, guidelines are silent on the issue of representation in SMC, organizers and teachers in mid-day meal schools and making the scheme non-discriminatory and participatory, except that the preference in appointment of cooks should be given to Scheduled Caste or widows. Diwakar (2012) suggests that regular monitoring is crucial to ensure proper functioning of a programme. There is a need to empower existing committees with clear guidelines relating to the roles and responsibilities of Mid-day Meal Scheme workers. Equally important is giving effective representation to marginalised groups on various committees, particularly at the grassroots

level, for better monitoring in their interests. The existing guidelines around monitoring performance need to be made caste-sensitive to address discrimination and exclusion. The intermingling of children from different castes is very important for future social cohesion. Preschool education in the ICDS (Integrated Child Development Services) is one such opportunity to bring children together through play who will then be covered under Mid-day Meal Scheme.

The findings of the study by **Dreze and Goyal** (2009) prove that the contribution of the program is diminishing due to unfair and exploitative conditions under which many Scheduled Castes cooks are employed. Many cooks in Chattisgarh and Rajasthan complained that their salaries are overdue and in some cases the delay has exceeded three months. There are also no proper guidelines on the responsibilities that cooks need to perform, which are given in Engagement of cook-cum helpers under Mid-day Meal Scheme (**MHRD** 2009). In the absence of a helper, the cook is supposed to prepare the meal and also serve, fetch water, clean utensils, collecting fuel, etc. Even their salaries are not clearly defined and they have to be content with whatever can be spared for them.

The Human Rights Watch (1999:26) *Broken People* brings out the pattern of exclusion in terms of segregation that is evidently visible in Mid-day meal scheme. Scheduled Castes children are made to sit at the back of the classrooms and are segregated from non-Scheduled Castes children during lunch time. Even Scheduled Castes teachers are segregated from non-Scheduled Castes teachers in accessing food and water during lunch time. It is also assumed that Scheduled Castes children don't need to be sheltered from the sun or the rain because they are used to such conditions, says **Valmiki** (2010). Findings by **NCDHR** (1999) point out that segregation encourages high dropout rate amongst Scheduled Castes. It perpetuates untouchability practices by teaching non-Scheduled Castes children that untouchability is both an acceptable and necessary practice, thereby undermining socialization role.

Several variations on the theme of segregation surfaced in the survey data. 31 percent of the villages (surveyed by **NCDHR** 2008) specifying the form of caste-based discrimination in their Mid-day Meal Scheme identified separate seating arrangements in their schools. In these instances, the Scheduled Caste children were required to sit apart from the dominant caste children; sometimes simply apart within the same space, other times outside of the school building, while the dominant caste children sat inside; and

on a lower level than their dominant caste peers. In 92 percent of the villages surveyed, the Scheduled Castes and the dominant caste children were served separate meals altogether. This separation was most evident in the case where two Mid-day Meal Scheme cooks – one Scheduled Caste and one dominant caste were employed for the same school. The practice of separate meals usually implies segregated drinking water arrangements as well.

Interestingly, segregated seating was not always an institution practiced from the inception of the Mid-day Meal Scheme. Paradigmatic of a trend most visible in the southern states, in Enathi village in Sivagangai district of Tamil Nadu, in 2001, the dominant caste community instituted segregated seating in the Mid-day Meal Scheme in a primary school where the Scheduled Castes and dominant caste children previously had been sitting and eating together. In Enathi, following a dispute between a dominant caste woman and a Scheduled Caste woman over the latter's right to draw water from a public well; the dominant caste woman's community attacked the Scheduled Caste colony resulting in the hospitalization of the Scheduled Caste woman and her husband. When the Scheduled Caste community approached the police and administration for justice, Enathi's dominant caste community organized rigorous social boycott of the Scheduled Castes by physically barricading their colony. It was in this context, that segregation was launched in the previously shared Mid-day Meal Scheme (ibid).

Accessibility for Scheduled Caste children is thus conditional and contingent to the fluctuating state of caste relations in the village or a region. Incidents like those at Enathi and Kamalaputhur villages in Tamil Nadu demonstrate how the Scheduled Castes children's access to the Mid-day Meal Scheme, already tenuous, as it is held in the dominant caste localities, is then cutoff when the dominant castes feel the need to reassert their hegemonies. All these instances and studies point to an extremely low level of Scheduled Castes' accessibility, participatory empowerment and ownership of Mid-day Meal Scheme (ibid).

Similar incidents reported in the survey are representative of a trend in which a caste conflict unrelated to the Mid-day Meal Scheme flares up in a village, often as a result of the Scheduled Castes' assertion of rights, and as a part of their efforts to reestablish hegemony; the dominant caste community initiates new forms of segregation (in the Mid-day Meal Scheme, for instance), and asserts new practices of

untouchability. In one village in Tamil Nadu, the respondents to the survey stated that the dominant caste government schoolteacher resolved the caste tensions in their village by introducing segregated seating arrangements. This instance is to be seen in the light of contradictions that Mid-day Meal Scheme guidelines put across. While on one hand, the Mid-day Meal Scheme guidelines advises to give preference to Scheduled Castes and widows when cooks are appointed but remains silent on the issue of giving preference and representation when teachers are appointed.

Respondents from another 8 villages reported more subtle forms of discrimination being practiced. In these villages, the dominant caste teachers practiced caste favoritism in serving the Mid-day Meal Scheme; treating the dominant caste children preferentially, and reserving the smaller or less desirable portions for the Scheduled Caste children (ibid).

However, the study also points out that the rates of reported discrimination were consistently lower when the Scheduled Castes organizers were in charge of the Mid-day Meal Scheme; when the Scheduled Castes cooks were cooking the mid-day meal; and when the Mid-day Meal Scheme was being held in a Scheduled Caste colony – than when the dominant caste organizers were in charge of the Mid-day Meal Scheme; when the dominant caste cooks were cooking the midday meal; and when the Mid-day Meal Scheme was being held in the dominant caste localities. Subjective comments from researchers and respondents also affirm that these trends were interlinked. It seems that people's participation, particularly the Scheduled Castes' participation is beginning to bring down levels of exclusion and caste-based discrimination in government schemes. Their 'access to' and 'fair treatment in' the Mid-day Meal Scheme is thus assured through their decision-making empowerment and real ownership stakes in the program.

The success of any welfare scheme largely depends on the people who are engaged in its implementation. Generally, the Mid-day Meal Scheme have been criticized for irregularities, non-adherence to guidelines and malpractices leading to leakages of benefits to non-beneficiaries and complete denial of service to some target groups (**Ramchandran** 2004). The evidence shows that dispensation of the Mid-day Meal Scheme is relatively better for SC children if the organisers of these services are also SC (**Diwakar** 2011; **Jan Sahas** 2009; **Thorat and Lee** 2005).

The Planning Commission (2010) shows how the Mid-day Meal Scheme is constrained due to lack of cooks and helpers. Sometimes this is despite people belonging to SCs being willing to provide their services as cooks and helpers in the MMS but who are then generally not accepted by other caste groups (Thorat and Lee 2005; Ramchandran 2004).

Amongst states of Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh, the percentage of Scheduled Castes cooks was found to be highest in Andhra Pradesh, wherein it had representation of Scheduled Castes cooks in 49% of the villages surveyed, whereas in Tamil Nadu, 39% of the villages surveyed had Scheduled Castes cooks and in Rajasthan 8% of the villages had Scheduled Castes as Mid-day Meal Scheme cooks. In this report done under Indian Institute of Dalit studies by **Thorat and Lee** in (2006), it can be seen how despite Supreme Court guidelines which give preference to Scheduled Caste coomunity, there is meager representation. There is no guideline on monitory mechanism which can ensure adequate representation of Scheduled Castes as cooks.

One has to keep in mind that the participatory empowerment in mid-day meal is not just limited to cooking per say but ownership is equally important. By ownership, it here means having self-representation and control over decision-making in operationalizing and implementing the program. Most often the organizers are school teachers or headmasters but in some places the Public Distribution System (PDS) dealers, *sarpach* or other community members hold the responsibility for implementing Mid-day Meal Scheme. The survey data by **Indian Institute of Dalit Studies** (2006) follows a pattern similar to that for the Scheduled Castes cooks, except highlighting the fact that there were even fewer Scheduled Castes employed as organizers (a decision-making position of authority) than they were as cooks. In Rajasthan, for instance, not a single Scheduled Caste was in-charge for the Mid-day Meal Scheme in the villages surveyed; 86 percent of the respondent villages had dominant caste organizers. Tamil Nadu followed with 73 percent dominant caste organizers and 27 percent Scheduled Castes' organizers. Again, Andhra Pradesh had the highest degree of Scheduled Castes participation and ownership in the Mid-day Meal Scheme, with 45 percent Scheduled Castes organizers and 51 percent dominant caste organizers (ibid).

Monitoring of the mid-day meal scheme

National Informatics Centre (NIC), which provides e-governance services to the government, regulates the monitoring of various schemes and programmes including mid-day meal scheme. It plays the role in facilitating the direct benefit transfer initiative of the government. Its role has become important in the backdrop of ICT based initiatives at government level. It has been tasked for implementation of various programmes and projects including mid-day meal scheme.

The NICNET (network infrastructure) utilizes hybrid network technologies to provide connectivity to government ministries, department, state governments and districts of India. One such network used in state of Uttar Pradesh is Interactive Voice Response System (IVRS). Mid-day Meal Authority (est. in 2006), Uttar Pradesh (www.upmdm.org), uses this technology to monitor/ audit the scheme. With the help of this technology, a track is maintained of every school and how many children ate food on daily basis and in how many schools food was not provided at all.

Monitoring or social audit is jointly done by people and the government. It ensures public accountability of agencies through a systematic demand of information by the community in response to the programmes that have already been implemented by the government. However, during the implementation of the scheme, its management information system (MIS) was found wanting; monitoring was neither timely nor comprehensive. Consequently, corrective action was also neither timely nor effective. Therefore, gradual improvements in implementation of the scheme could not be done and the scheme did not become as successful as desired.

Reports on the performance evaluation of mid-day meal scheme have been done by Mid-day Meal Authority of **U.P., Planning Commission, Akshayapatra (NGO), NUEPA (National University of Educational Planning and Administration), MHRD, CES, CSDS, NCDHR and IIDS.** Reports produced by these organizations have examined multitude of factors such as parents' income background/economic status, social status, their educational status, occupational status, intake of food, drop-out rate of children, out of school children, beneficiary status.

As per **Planning Commission** (2010: iv-vi), except for Tamil Nadu and Kerala, in rest of the states a majority of sample schools, on an average, suffer from the unavailability and poor functional condition of kitchen sheds. All the states, except for Bihar and Rajasthan, have reported poor availability of

tumblers. Except for Rajasthan, all the states have reported a poor availability of plates. In most of the states, teachers spend about one to two hours daily on activities related to Mid-day Meal Scheme thereby reducing precious teaching time. Out of the 17 sample states where the data was collected, students in 9 states (including Uttar Pradesh) reported that they were involved in washing utensils. It has also been observed that the programme has resulted in the diversion of the attention of teachers and students on activities related to it, rather than towards teaching and learning activities, which results in loss of studies.

NUEPA (2009:10) reports that the food samples have levels of uric acid much higher than the stipulated rules of Prevention of Food Adulteration (PFA). This only points to the possibility of the presence of rodents in storage areas, either in schools or at the warehouses of Food Corporation of India (FCI). While infestation is close to PFA limits for cleaned material, unclean materials have very high percentage of infestation. The quantity of broken grains was quite high in all three places for unclean rice. In Ellis Bridge location worms were found in rice. No foreign matters such as animal droppings or hair were found in the samples. Traces of aflatoxin were found in rice at the Sabarmati and Ellis Bridge locations. Presence of aflatoxins in food samples is a serious concern, for aflatoxin is a carcinogen and prolonged consumption of it may lead to liver cancer. PFA allows 30 ppb intake of aflatoxin but its intake is undesirable for children. The name aflatoxin is derived from the fungi Aspergillus flavus which produces the toxin in moist and hot conditions. Improper pre and post-harvest handling of agricultural commodities produces aflatoxin. Observation regarding aflatoxins was corroborated by the laboratory isolation of this fungus.

These reports bring forth the dismal conditions in which mid-day meal scheme is being implemented in state of Uttar Pradesh. But again these reports need to be understood in terms of how bureaucratic power is exercised to induce inefficiency which ensures constant indispensability of such parastatals and programmes.

Studies done hitherto to understand the Impact of the Scheme

It has been argued that the mid-day meal disrupt classroom processes. **Dreze and Goyal** (2009) suggested that teachers are mostly asked to spend time on cooking instead of teaching. Many also spend

time on organizing and supervising mid-day meal. It is also argued that mid-day meals certainly disrupt classroom processes when the infrastructure is inadequate.

Probe Revisted (2013) also proves that the argument that Mid-day Meal Scheme negatively affects school performance. Apart from the teaching load, teachers have day-to-day responsibility for the supervision of the midday meal scheme and the filling of the attendance register. At the start of the year, they were involved in enrolment campaigns. Through the year teachers had to provide regular data to the authorities at block level. They also had to report on other incentive schemes, and to work closely with the community in education committees.

The increasing load of non-academic work such as partaking in Mid-day Meal Scheme becomes demotivating for teachers. The incentives provided by the Union and State Governments have very limited role in helping the overwhelmingly large majority of the Scheduled Castes living under conditions of staggering poverty, exploitation and are downtrodden to go in for education. **Human Resource Development Ministry** (1993) report shows that even the free mid-day meal scheme of the government introduced in seventeen states to attract students from the deprived conditions to schools has not really affected the drop-outs. According to the report, the mid-day meal has no real impact on the drop-out rate of SC/ST communities.

Problems like drop-out, stagnation and failure leads to inferiorization of Scheduled Castes, argues **Rath** (2001). The dominant castes especially in rural areas are not only contemptuous of the employment of Scheduled Castes but also of education of their children. They have their own vested interests in keeping them illiterate. The same attitude is reflected among the dominant caste that are reluctant to see them being employed as cooks in Mid-day Meal Scheme. There exists a nexus between the dominant caste parents and the teachers to keep the Scheduled Caste students out of education. The social environment considerably affects the interests of Scheduled Castes in education.

Probe (1999) and **Singh** (2004) brings a positive aspect to it. The scheme exhibits a positive influence on enrolment and attendance in schools. A hungry child is less likely to attend school regularly. Hunger drains them of their will and ability to learn. Chronic hunger leads to malnutrition. It also delays or stops the physical and mental growth of children. Mid-Day Meals have an important social value and foster

equality. As children learn to sit together and share a common meal, the survey expects some erosion will be there in caste prejudices and class inequality.

A study in Birbhum district of West Bengal states that the Mid-Day Meal Scheme had led to a significant increase in enrolment and attendance of children, the increase being particularly marked in the case of girls and children from the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. It further says that the scheme had averted severe under-nourishment, reduced social distances and curbed teacher absenteeism. (**Pratichi Trust**, 2005).

Rama Naik (2005) reports that the Mid-Day Meal Scheme had improved student enrolment and reduced teacher absenteeism in Karnataka. She also found that mid-day meals were being served regularly and both parents and students were highly satisfied with the scheme. Another study, covering 211 schools in 14 blocks of Chittorgarh district, also found that the enrolment and retention had increased in about 64 per cent of the schools over the last three years (Dreze and Goyal 2003).

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In state of Uttar Pradesh, mid-day meal scheme was implemented since 2004 with a stated perspective. However, there are alarming trends of malnutrition (indicator of poverty) in state. National Family Health Survey (2019-20: 88) brings state of nutritional status in Uttar Pradesh, wherein Scheduled Caste (SC) has 59.7% stunted while Scheduled Tribes (ST) has 68.5%, Other Backward Castes (OBCs) has 59% and others have 48.3% stunted. Under the category of wasting, SC has 16.1%, ST has 33.3%, OBCs has 14.47% wasted and other has 12.8% wasted.

Apart from unsatisfactory nutritional status, Uttar Pradesh has unsatisfactory education indicators as well. The literacy rate of Uttar Pradesh is 67.68% while that of SCs is 60.9% (Statistics Diary, State Planning Institute, Uttar Pradesh 2011:255). Pratham Report (2014:225:226) shows how children of government school studying in class 5^{th} are not able to answer class 2^{nd} level questions. Overall, the situation with basic reading continues to be extremely disheartening.

In the light of above this, proposed study will attempt to analyze the impact of mid-day meal program on Scheduled Caste (SC) students admitted in selected primary schools of Kanpur Nagar district, Uttar Pradesh. The study would attempt to understand the role of the Mid-day Meal Scheme in motivating

Scheduled Caste students to attend schools. Further, it will try to understand its impact on their health. In the same vein, the study will also probe whether the scheme has brought any qualitative changes in their skills of learning. In doing so, the study will highlight the process of exclusion and inclusion of the Scheduled Caste students in the scheme. The type of discrimination they face will also be analyzed in the study.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The study becomes relevant in the present context because Scheduled Caste students are not quite doing well on health and education parameters as per Government reports. Study will try to bring out the causal factors behind high incidence of malnutrition, stunting and wasting in SC children. Further, study becomes important because it will try to look into the reasons of low level of literacy amongst them. Scheduled Castes have been deprived of various rights, resources, social, cultural and economic capital thereby pushing them further into poverty. It can thus be argued that the study becomes significant as it will delve deeper into issues that concern the Scheduled Caste students.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

- To understand the nature of Mid-day Meal Scheme sociologically.
- To examine and analyze the nutritional impact of the Mid-day Meal Scheme on Scheduled Caste students.
- To examine and assess the educational impact of Mid-day Meal Scheme on Scheduled Caste students in terms of their motivation of going to school and learning skills.
- To understand the forms of exclusion that Scheduled Caste students face in mid-day meal scheme.
- To understand the composition of School Management and Development Committee (SMC) sociologically and the impact of its composition.

HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY:

- The Mid-day Meal Scheme is discriminatory in nature.
- Mid-day Meal as a scheme is not being able to bring about positive change in the lives of SC students.
- Most of the SC students are facing discriminatory behavior not only at hands of school teachers but

also fellow students, cooking staff, school and management committee.

- Mid-day Meal Scheme is not being able to bring about feeling of brotherhood amongst school children.
- Mid-day Meal Scheme is leading to increasing drop-out amongst SC students.
- Mid-day Meal Scheme is leading to forced unemployment in SC people.
- Mid-day Meal Scheme has failed to bring any qualitative changes in skills of learning of SC students.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- Whether Mid-day Meal Scheme has helped students in the improvement of their health?
- Whether Mid-day Meal Scheme has motivated Scheduled Castes parents' to send their children to school?
- Whether Mid-day Meal Scheme has motivated Scheduled Castes students to come to school?
- Whether Mid-day Meal Scheme has helped Scheduled Caste students to enhance the capacity of their learning skills?
- Are you satisfied with the quality and quantity of the food served to the kids in Mid-day Meal Scheme?
- What is the mechanism of exclusion?
- Who is responsible for exclusion—the management, children, teacher or cook?
- What is the mechanism of inclusion?
- How do the students behave with the Scheduled Caste students?
- Is this a good scheme for the welfare of the students in general and Scheduled Caste students in particular?
- Is it an extra burden on the management, teachers and other functionaries?
- Has Mid-day Meal Scheme motivated Scheduled Caste students to attend school?
- Has it enhanced their learning skills?
- Do you think there is any discrimination against the Scheduled Caste students in Mid-day Meal Scheme?

RESEARCH GAP

Various studies which have been done hitherto have evaluated the performance of Mid-day Meal Scheme; however, this study particularly would attempt to understand whether the scheme has brought any qualitative changes in students' skills of learning. The study would also bring out agencies responsible for exclusion of students from the scheme. Lastly, the study would identify patterns of segregation, exclusionary and inclusionary practices. Last study on mid-day meal scheme was conducted in year 2014 by Abhijeet Singh; however its focus was mainly on southern states of India. Besides, studies done by Dreze, Reetika Khera, Seedheshwar Shukla have not specifically focused on Uttar Pradesh though Thorat in one of his study has focused on Uttar Pradesh.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Methodology is the systematic, theoretical analysis of the methods applied to a field of the study. It comprises theoretical analysis of body of methods and principles associated with a branch of knowledge.

Table 1: Source: Census 2011

Total Population of U.P.	199,812,341
Male Population	104,480,510
Female Population	95,331,831
Total Literacy	67.68%
Male Literacy	77.28%
Female Literacy	57.18%
SC Literacy of UP	60.9%
Total SC Population in U.P.	39,962,468 (20% of Total Population of U.P)

Table 2; Source: Census 2011

Total Population of Kanpur Nagar	4,581,268
Male Population of Kanpur Nagar	2,459,806
Female Population of Kanpur Nagar	2,121,462
Sex Ratio of Kanpur Nagar	862
Total Literacy Rate of Kanpur Nagar	79.65%
Male Literacy Rate of Kanpur Nagar	83.62%
Female Literacy Rate of Kanpur Nagar	75.05%

Total SC Population in Kanpur	816,754 (17.8% of total population)
Male SC Population in Kanpur	439,603
Female SC Population in Kanpur	377,151
Total SC Literacy Rate of Kanpur Nagar	68.5%

Research Design

The research design will be explanatory and exploratory in nature. It will identify the limitations, patterns of segregation and exclusionary practices within the mid-day meal scheme.

Area of the Study

The area of the study is Kanpur Nagar District, Uttar Pradesh.

Unit of the Study

Unit of the study will be Scheduled Caste students of Primary Schools.

Tools of the Data Collection & Sources of Data

The study will be based on both primary and secondary data. The secondary data will be collected from the various levels that include data from state, district, tehsil and blocks level. The primary data source units will be schools wherein the data will be collected with in-depth interviews with Head Teachers, teachers, parents, cooking staff and organizers/SMC members to collect the first hand information of the status of the scheme. This will be done with the help of purposive sampling. The school observation will be one of the crucial tools for the validation of responses at every step of the data collection.

Students will be observed and parents will be interviewed to assess the impact of Mid-day Meal Scheme. Parents will be asked questions regarding the change in the nutritional status of their children before and after attending the school. Further, they will also be asked whether the children tell about the discrimination they undergo in schools. The behavior of teachers, cooks and other school staff towards students in general and Scheduled Caste students in particular will be looked at. Parents will also be asked whether their children reveal anything about their classmates which they feel uncomfortable with. Along with the parents, school teachers will be interviewed to know their opinion about Mid-day Meal Scheme. Children will also be observed, interviewed and projective technique method will be applied on them to assess the impact of the mid-day meal scheme.

Universe of the Study

According to the recent National Family Health survey (2019-20), Uttar Pradesh comes second after Bihar among the major Indian states in terms of the incidence of under nutrition among children. Mid-day Meal Scheme is therefore being implemented in the state to improve the nutrition level of children. Henceforth the above rationale to choose U.P. is to understand the role of Mid-day Meal Scheme and how far it has been effective in achieving its intended purpose.

Within the state of U.P., Kanpur Nagar has been identified as a district from where the study would collect its primary data. The literacy rate of Scheduled Caste population in Kanpur Nagar is 68.5%, which is second highest in Uttar Pradesh (Statistics Diary, State Planning Institute, Uttar Pradesh 2011:289). The highest literacy rate of SC population is in Ghaziabad (73.4%) but because Ghaziabad covers NCR region therefore the study has chosen Kanpur which has highest literacy rate in western U.P. and is also the dying industrial city. Therefore, the study would attempt to see the extent to which Mid-day Meal Scheme has been effective in bringing change and improvement.

Sample of the Study

Kanpur district got divided into two districts: Kanpur Nagar district and Kanpur Dehat district in year 1977. There are 4 tehsils in Kanpur Nagar (Kanpur Sadar, Bilhaur, Ghatampur, Narwal) which are divided into 10 Blocks and 6 tehsils in Kanpur Dehat (Akbarpur, Bhognipur, Derapur, Rasulabad, Sikandra, Maitha). Ghatampur Tehsil (3 blocks) has maximum SC population while Kanpur Sadar (2 blocks) has minimum SC population in Kanpur Nagar. Out of these 5 blocks, study will select 8 schools which will have maximum SC population and 8 schools which will have minimum SC population. On the basis of random sampling, 30 students from each school will be selected as sample. The enrollment data collected from Basic Shiksha Parishad's office will help to identify 16 schools in these 5 blocks. Besides students, Scheduled Caste teachers and Scheduled Caste cooks from each school will be interviewed along with School Management and Development Committee (SMC) members.

TENTATIVE CHAPTERIZATION

CHAPTER: 1

Introduction

Evolution of Mid-day Meal Scheme in India

Mid-day Meal Scheme and its Role in Education of Children

Operationalization of the Concept

Statement of the Problem

Significance of the Study

Review of Literature

Objectives of the Study

CHAPTER: 2

Hypotheses of the Study

Research Methodology

CHAPETR: 3

Impact of Mid-day Meal Scheme on School Participation and Nutritional Status of Students

CHAPTER: 4

Impact of Mid-day Meal Scheme on Scheduled Castes of Kanpur

CHAPTER: 5

Pattern of Exclusion and Inclusion

CHAPTER 6:

Changes required in the Mid-day Meal Scheme: Issues and Suggestions

CHAPTER 7:

Conclusion

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